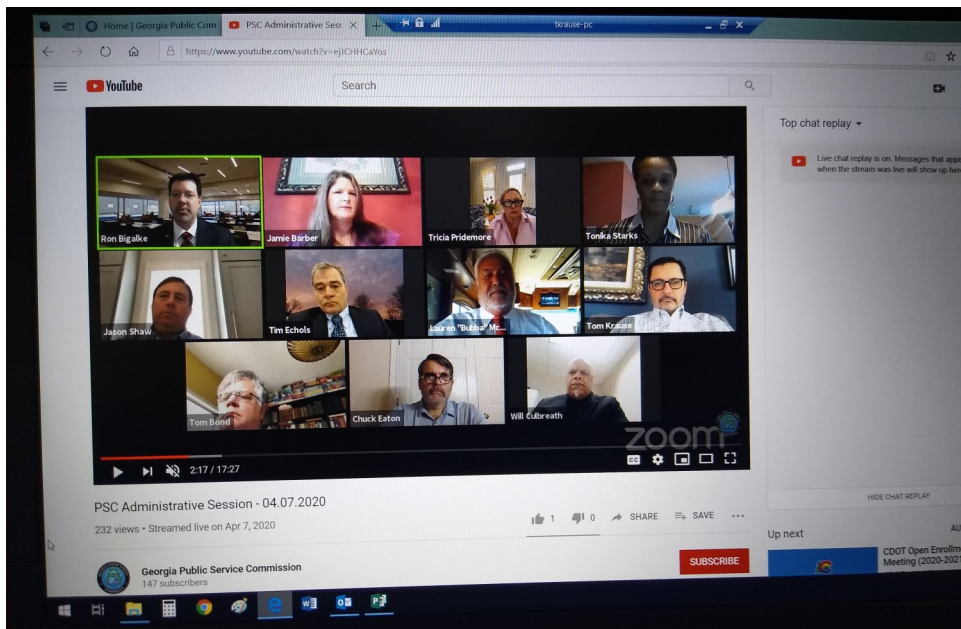


The PSC Pulse

COVID-19 AND THE NEW NORMAL



On March 12, amid growing concerns of Coronavirus, Gov. Brian Kemp issued an order that state employees who can telework should telework. By the beginning of April, that became a stay at home order for all Georgia residents, with a list of exceptions including work for Georgians who perform essential services and for necessities including shopping for food.

The Georgia Public Service Commission has continued its mission to ensure Georgians have access to low cost, reliable utility service by financially viable companies. To that end, regular committee meetings and administrative hearings have continued. First, with only a few staffers and Commissioners in the hearing room, then entirely online.

The grid of faces, sitting at home in front of their computers, has become a familiar site for businesses and governments alike.



PANEL DISCUSSES FUTURE OF EVs



Commissioner **Jason Shaw** sat on a panel at Georgia Tech to discuss the future of electric transportation in the Southeast.

Shaw specifically addressed the challenges of electric vehicles in Georgia's spread-out rural areas that have few charging stations.

CAPITOL SIGHTINGS



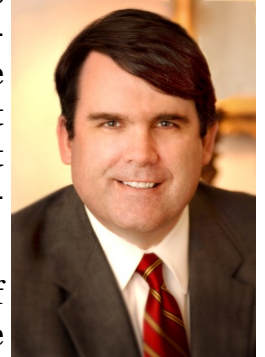
Commissioner **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** dropped by the Gold Dome during the legislative session and ran into Congressman Jody Hice of Monroe, GA.

COMMISSIONER EATON TAKES OVER AS PSC CHAIRMAN

Every two years, the PSC Commissioners elect a chairman. For 2020-2022, Commissioner **Chuck Eaton** was selected by his peers. Commissioner Eaton, was first elected to the PSC in 2006. He previously served as chair in 2008-2009 and 2012-2016.

As the new chairman, his first order of business was to negotiate a new PSC budget based on Gov. Brian Kemp's ordered cuts. Through negotiation with legislators and the Governor's staff and through the work of PSC budget staff, the 2020 cuts were not as bad as they could have been. The 2021 budget is not complete due to the Coronavirus pandemic. There is still much work ahead.

Chairman Eaton has also had the difficult task of guiding committee hearings and administrative sessions via online meetings, a first for the PSC.



COMMISSION WELCOMES TEENPACT

Long before **Tim Echols** became a PSC commissioner, he had a vision to help youths learn about the political process. In 1994, he started TeenPact Leadership Schools. The concept was to help young Georgians understand the political process, value their liberty, defend their Christian faith, and engage the culture.

Now, TeenPact is active in 45 states where it offers students ages 13-19 hands-on learning experiences in state capitols.



Commissioner Tim Echols



Commissioner Jason Shaw

The inaugural TeenPact class had 18 students. Earlier this year, more than 100 youths filled the PSC hearing room and listened to Georgia politicians including Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold Melton and each of the five PSC Commissioners.

WORK AT THE STATE'S LARGEST CONSTRUCTION SITE, NEW REACTORS AT PLANT VOGTLE, AFFECTED BY COVID-19

In February, workers at the Vogtle nuclear reactor expansion project completed a milestone. The concrete work was completed at the Unit 3 container vessel that will house the unit's nuclear reactor. Unfortunately, like much work in Georgia, fears of the Coronavirus has slowed efforts.

With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, as well as local, state and federal health officials, safety measures were put in place to protect workers. As the virus spread through Georgia, however, several workers tested positive. The workforce of about 9,000 employees was cut by 20 percent to aid in social distancing at the site.

Georgia Power officials expect to complete Unit 3 by November 2021 and Unit 4 by November 2022. Public Service Commission staff have not been as optimistic and has said keeping those completion dates would be difficult.

In an April statement Georgia Power officials has said the reduction in staffing and the additional safety measures should not affect the cost or timeline of the construction.



Commissioners **Bubba McDonald** and **Jason Shaw** visit the Vogtle nuclear construction site in March.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION STARTS BUSY WITH BUDGET, RURAL BROADBAND, THEN HALTS ABRUPTLY

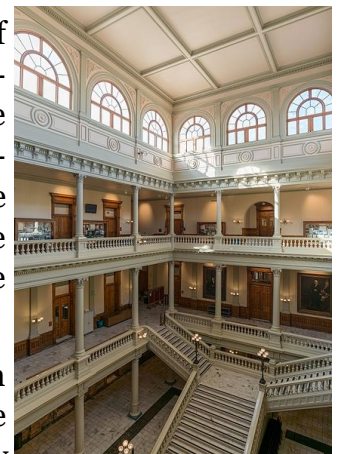
Shortly before the Georgia General Assembly gaveled in to start the 2020 legislative session, one large issue loomed above the others. Gov. Brian Kemp requested all departments cut their budget by 4 percent for fiscal year 2020 and 6 percent for 2021. Surely this would be the biggest issue of the year... Well, it seems 2020 had other plans.



For the PSC (aside from the budget), rural broadband again was a top issue. In 2019, Senate Bill 2 gave the PSC authority to approve cost allocation manuals for EMCs that want to provide high speed internet to rural areas. In 2020, legislators were grappling with pole attachment fees.

Cable providers said they would invest in rural broadband if EMCs lowered the fees charged to attach cable to their utility poles. EMCs argued that upkeep of the poles is expensive and the fees are justified. In an attempt to resolve the matter, House Majority Leader Jon Burns and Rep. Ron Stephens came to the PSC. They asked if the Commissioners could open a docket, collect evidence and hold hearings to set pole fees. Commissioners said they could and the House passed a bill requiring the hearings.

March 13, before the Senate could debate the bill, the legislature shut down due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Hundreds of bills, including the pole-fee bill, remain unresolved — as does the FY2021 budget. The budget is the only matter written in the Constitution that the legislature is required to address.



The empty halls of the Georgia State Capitol

INFLUENCIAL



Every year, Georgia Trend Magazine publishes its list of the “100 Most Influential Georgians.”

In 2020, this prestigious group included the likes of Ed Bastian, CEO of Delta Airlines; Dr. Patrice Harris, the president of the American Medical Association; U.S. Senator David Perdue; and PSC Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald**.

Georgia Trend specifically pointed to McDonald’s longtime support of solar energy in Georgia.



Commissioner **Tim Echols** interviewed a very influential guest for his radio show: Georgia First Lady Marty Kemp. They discussed work on a topic important to both of them, the fight against human trafficking.

TOURING THE BRAND NEW NATHAN DEAL JUDICIAL CENTER



Standing on the veranda of the Judicial Center, overlooking the Capitol

Commissioner **Tim Echols** a few PSC staffers and some VIPs took a tour of the new Nathan Deal Judicial Center that houses the Georgia Court of Appeals and Georgia Supreme Court. The tour was guided by Court of Appeals Judge Christian Coomer and Supreme Court Justice Charlie Bethel.

Joining the tour were some Consulates General including Dr. Heike Fuller of Germany, Andrew Staunton, of England; and Kim Young-jun of Korea.

The \$130 million Judicial Center opened in February and carries the name of former legislator, judge, and Governor Nathan Deal.



Inside the Georgia Court of Appeals

NOW IS THE TIME TO THANK A LINEWORKER

Every April, Georgia celebrates Lineworker Appreciation Month. This year, during the Coronavirus pandemic, we are relying even more on those who work in the field to ensure that the lights come on when we flip the switch.

Georgia’s electricity providers released tips on how you can thank a lineman or linewoman but keep them safe at the same time.

If you see utility crews, stay back a minimum of six feet – much more if they are working. They ask that you do not provide cookies or treats for workers during this time. A wave or thumbs up is enough for them to understand your gratitude. Don’t touch utility trucks or equipment. Electric providers are operating under modified conditions to keep workers safe, which includes additional cleaning and sanitation of tools and equipment. You are urged to post your appreciation for lineworkers on social media using the hashtag #ThankALineman.



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PEACHTREE ROAD UMC TEAMS UP WITH HOPEWORKS



At HopeWorks, all the widows are sheltering in place. Many of them have no means to buy groceries or to find someone to perform home maintenance such as yard work.

Beth Spencer, Director of Outreach at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church called HopeWorks and offered to help. When HopeWorks found which widows were in need, Beth and her volunteers went to work.



“I keep being amazed at the kindness and generosity of this amazing church,” said HopeWorks Executive Director Michael Kimsey. “They love our widows and are willing to show it by these selfless acts of love. I called our widows after all the groceries were delivered, leaves raked and grass cut. All of our ladies were overflowing with gratitude for this great group of believers.”



In 2015, the Georgia Public Service Commission approved a grant for the HopeWorks program through the Atlanta Gas Light Company Universal Service Fund. The program can repair or replace gas furnaces or hot water heaters for seniors who own and live in their home and who meet financial restrictions.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK



Pipeline Safety Inspector **Daphne Jones** was in Athens this February inspecting Atlanta Gas Light's Athens Service Center.



The U.S. Attorney's Office offers the following tips to avoid Coronavirus-related scams:

Hang up on robocalls. Scammers use them to pitch scam Coronavirus treatments, work-at-home schemes or fake help in expediting a government check.

Verify information. Contact trusted sources to confirm information is correct.

Know who you're buying from. Online sellers may claim to have products, like cleaning, household, and medical supplies when, in fact, they don't.

Don't click on links from unknown sources. They could download viruses.

Do your homework. Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation. If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.

If you believe you were scammed, call local police.

Report Coronavirus Fraud
National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF)
1-866-720-5721
disaster@leo.gov



The Federal Trade Commission offers the following cybersecurity tips to use while teleworking to help keep viruses, ransomware, malware and other nasty stuff off your computer and off your employer's server:

- Keep your security software up to date. Make sure the passwords are long, strong and unique: at least 12 characters and a mix of numbers, symbols and capital and lowercase letters.
- On your router, turn on encryption — WPA2 or WPA3. This scrambles information sent over your network so outsiders can't read it. No WPA3 or WPA2 options on your router? Try updating your router software, then check again.
- If you're using a laptop, make sure it is password-protected, locked and secure. Never leave it unattended — like in a vehicle or at a public charging station.
- Follow your employer's security practices. Your home is now an extension of your office. So, follow the protocols that your employer has implemented.

PSC HONORS LONG-TIME EMPLOYEES' SERVICE

At the close of every year, the Public Service Commission honors its long-term employees with certificates of appreciation and a luncheon. At our recent ceremony, 11 employees received certificates. This is a testament to the dedication of these employees and to the workplace environment at the PSC.



Four employees received five-year certificates: **Faith Henning, Preston Thomas, Nick Cooper, and Lynn Page.**

Two employees received 10-year certificates: **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald and Cathy Nesbitt.**

Ontario Johnson received a 15-year certificate.

Two employees received 20-year certificates: **Jeff Stair and Claudette Willingham.**

Earnest Whatley received a 25 year certificate.

Alan Towe received a 30-year certificate.

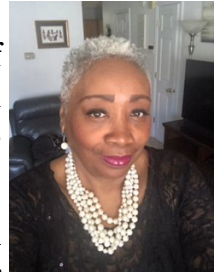


62 YEARS OF PSC EXPERIENCE DANCE INTO RETIREMENT



The PSC lost invaluable experience with the retirements of three employees who had been with the commission for a combined 62 years.

Janice Sears was hired in 2005. She worked in Consumer Affairs for three years, then was promoted to the Gas Unit, where she worked for more than 11 years.



Jeff Stair was hired as an attorney in 1999. When he left, he was the PSC lead attorney having litigated countless rate cases and IRPs.

Sheree Kernizan started at the PSC in 1993. She began as a public utilities engineer. When she retired, she had been the director of the Electric Unit for 22 years.

These dedicated employees will be missed.



**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY!**



30 YEARS

Leon Bowles



20 YEARS

Pat Welcome



20 YEARS

Patrick Reinhardt



MILESTONES

Erica Wilson, an analyst in the Telecom Unit is engaged to Alfonzie Wilson. They are planning a destination Wedding in Costa Rica on June 24th, 2020.



Commission Chairman **Chuck Eaton's** daughter Lily recently celebrated her 3rd birthday with a "Frozen"-themed cake.

Maritza Rivera, with Facilities Protection said she was hesitant to share the news but, unfortunately, her dog Thor ("my little superhero," she called him) passed away from cancer on March 28. He was 9 years old and had been with her since he was 6 weeks.



COMMISSION CALENDAR

May 2020

5—Administrative Session

5—#29849 GPC VCM Report

14—Committee Meetings

19—Administrative Session

19- #43011 GPC Fuel Cost Recovery

28—Committee Meetings

28— Special Administrative Session—GPC Fuel Cost Recovery

June 2020

2—Administrative Session

11—Committee Meetings

16—Administrative Session

25—#29849 GPC VCM Report

30—#42959 Liberty Rate Case

July 2020

1—#42959 Liberty Rate Case

2—Committee Meetings

3—State Holiday

7—Administrative Session

16—Committee Meetings

21—Administrative Session

23—#29849 GPC VCM Report

30—Committee Meetings

HOLIDAYS COMING UP!



Sunday, May 10



Monday, May 25



Saturday, July 4
(State Holiday—Friday, July 3)

Georgia Public Service Commission

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COMMISSIONERS

Chuck Eaton, Chairman
Tim G. Echols, Vice Chair
Lauren “Bubba” McDonald
Tricia Pridemore
Jason Shaw

The Public Information Office publishes The PSC Pulse for the Georgia Public Service Commission. Information for The PSC Pulse should be sent to the attention of **Tom Krause, Public Information Officer** or **Lynn Page, Newsletter Editor**.

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